<Back



Yonkers Green Policy Task Force News

What We Do
Bob Walters - Chairman
Laura Fahrenthold - Coordinator
Joe D'Lando
Mel Goldstein
Terry Joshi
Loretta Miraglia
Molly Roffman
Margaret Setterholm
Nortrud Wolf Spero
And the Greenies Winners
Were...

Sign Up

SIGN-UP!

Quick Links

Potluck Picnic

Please mark your calendars for 4:30 -7 p.m. on Sunday, June 7 to join greenminded residents for a Potluck Picnic being held at the Groundworks



on the Yonkers downtown waterfront.

To RSVP for the free barge tour and picnic, please email greenies200 9@gmail.com

Everyone is welcome and asked to please bring a dish to pass. We will provide the supplies.

See you on the waterfront, RAIN or SHINE! We will email you again before the picnic with the alternative covered picnic site.

What We Do



Welcome to the Yonkers Green Policy Task Force's first edition eblast newsletter. Our goal is provide you with great information and news updates on all green goings-on in Yonkers and its environs.

The GPTF was formed on Earth Day, 2007 and is comprised of seven deeplydevoted community

volunteers who were each

appointed by a city council member.

The Task Force members research and submit potential "green" legislative initiatives to the City Council; work on potential quality-of-life improvements for the Yonkers community; apply for environmental grants; and foster educational outreach for Yonkers students as well as the community-at-large. They hold public meetings the first and third Wednesdays of each month at City Hall in addition to spending countless hours working toward their goals and policy agendas on their "off" time.

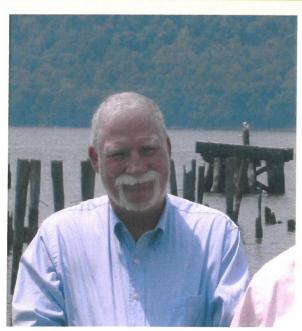
We encourage readers to send us photos (maybe of your first seed vegetable seed sprouts or a sunset); stories (send us the link to a great article you read on green construction, for example, or write one yourself); green postings (freebies, recipes, garage sales, barters); green event listings; green tips (how to do XYZ); and more to keep the newsletter lively.

Note that the sooner you send in your news, the better chance it has of making it into the eblast on time. Send all ideas and information to Laura.Fahrenthold@yonkersny.gov and note that PDF's (posters, etc.) must be accompanied by an informative word document that outlines the 5 w's (who, what, where, why, when, how) for easy editing and inclusion.

We need to come up with a clever, catchy name for the newsletter. The winner will receive eblast kudos, plus this/her very own LED lightbulb, two tickets to the Museum of Natural History's Climate Change exhibit, and maybe even a reusable shopping bag compliments of the GPTF.

Here's who we are:

Bob Walters - Chairman



It is only fitting that Bob is chairman of the Green Policy Task Force as well as executive director of the Science Barge for Groundwork Hudson Valley.

As a child growing up in Inwood, Bob's formative years were spent exploring the nearby park and boating off an antique barge/boathouse on the Harlem River, something to which he attributes his life-long environmental passion.

"I was either in the water or on the water for most of my life," says the avid canoeist who once took a 12- day trip from Lake Champlain to the Long Island Sound. "I am happiest when working on and promoting the river."

A true environmental advocate, Bob started

what he hoped would be an alternative energy store selling solar panels, wind turbines, and other energy reduction products in the 70's after Jimmy Carter urged the country to use alternative energy sources.

"Originally I thought I would save the world, but it turned out to be a regular energy efficient window/door installation business," says Bob of the operation he continues running today. "Over the years, our interaction with average homeowners has saved millions of gallons of fossil fuel and made people more aware of their carbon footprint."

While still holding onto hope for residential geothermal installations, Bob has found other ways to forward a green agenda. He helped build the Hudson River Sloop, "The Sojourner Truth"; served as Beczak Environmental Education Center's first Executive Director and acted as a founding board member; wrote a 10-year local newspaper column called "River Notes"; and worked as a tour guide on the Yonkers Water Taxi among many other endeavors.

"More cities and communities need to follow Yonkers' lead in offering citizens a task force like this," he says. "We now have the government's ear and are making great green things happen in Yonkers."

Laura Fahrenthold - Coordinator

What they lacked in terms of long-term roots in Yonkers, Laura and her husband made up for in community service after moving to Yonkers in 2001.

Wanting to promote Yonkers to others as a great place to live, work and raise a family, the couple produced a major art show called Y.O.H. (Yonkers on Hudson) which attracted more than 1500 visitors on opening weekend in 2005. (The show ran for one month.) Laura then worked for the Yonkers City Council President's office in communications for two years before moving to the position of her passion: Yonkers Green Policy Task Force Coordinator.

After expanding Yonkers April calendar of green events from a week to a month and producing the Greenies environmental awards, she is currently tackling the EPA grant for retrofitting busges and promoting the no-idling law, among other legislative initiatives.



"Laura has become an immediate problem solver with her fresh approach to understanding and promoting our initiatives," says Bob Walters. "We as a task force and the city as a whole are happy to have someone with her talent and tenacity on the force."

Her family enjoys boating/swimming on the Hudson River, greenhouse and ground gardening, skiing, and camping.

Joe D'Lando

Looking out his office window,

Joe D'Lando can see the fabric of his family's life here in Yonkers, from the house his grandparents moved to from Italy in 1906; his parents home where he was raised and even his own home where he raised his own three children. When he turns slightly to the left, he can see his church and grade school.

"My whole life is outside this window," he says, recalling a time when Yonkers had a true identity as a working class, industrial city and how that has changed over the decades since his father proudly worked at Refined Sugars for 40 years.

This is where his job as the city's Director of Special Projects comes in-- to help Yonkers gain a modern, economic edge through assisting for profit and non-profit developers to invest in the rebuilding of the city's downtown and waterfront.

"We need to reclaim the city by cleaning up the brownfields, designating open space and gaining access back to the river while developing the city for future viability," he says, adding that his position representing the Commissioner of Planning and Development on the Green Policy Task Force is vital to the balance.

He believes the Task Force is fulfilling its mission and looks forward to continuing his service.

"Other communities should look at our model of smart development and cooperation," he says. "I know I will see the changes in my lifetime and that is what's important to me to pass down to the next generation."

Mel Goldstein

Mel and his wife moved to Yonkers in 1960 and still live in the same house where they raised and educated their three children.

As a retired chemical engineer with many years of working in the construction industry, Mel wanted to lend his expertise and technical knowledge of solar and renewable energy to the city via the Task Force.

"I have been interested in the environment since my early working days," he



says. "This is a great opportunity to apply that knowledge to help Yonkers move ahead as the city

changes and develops."

Mel's work with the Task Force helping to craft LEED legislation with the city's legal and legislative resources is something he is especially proud of. As the legislation goes through the process before hopefully becoming adopted by the City Council, he has been trying to identify a grant to replace standard traffic signals with LED lights. While some have been changed out on Central Park Avenue, his goal is to convert even more if not all. He also would like to create a public outreach program to make residents more aware of potential energy and cost savings by turning off unnecessary lights, lowering thermostat temperatures, making home improvements such as reinsulation and/or window and door replacement, and more.

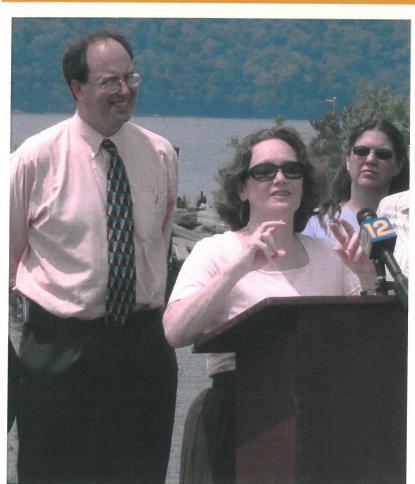
"The more people know, the more they can contribute to the overall goal, which is to reduce our energy needs and to reduce greenhouse gases," he says.

Mel jokes that he had more free time in life when he was working, as opposed to in his retirement. In addition to being a member of the Yonkers Green Policy Task Force and working as a certified boating safety instructor, Mel is active in a number of other organizations including his role as an officer in the United States Power Squadrons. He says his hobbies of photography, boating and stamp collecting have fallen off a bit lately.

"I take the same advice I give out in class, which is to ride the wave," he says.

Photo: Mel is on the far right.

Terry Joshi



Terry Joshi committed to environmentalism in 1962 after reading Rachel Carson's "Silent Spring."

She believes that each of us can contribute in small but vital ways to preventing and even redressing the decay of our physical environment if we are willing to work hard for effective change at the local level.

She thinks we should all think globally and act locally; work tirelessly for education initiatives that will instill awareness of the enormity of the problem; and fight for legislation that leads us through political change toward sustainable environmental goals that will preserve the remaining quality of world-wide air, water, forests and fields.

"The reality is that without

our individual labors on this cause, this planet will not be able to support the human race, much

less the millions of other equally unique and valuable species that inhabit it with us," she says.

Terry's professional life has been primarily as an arts administrator within the realm of music and theatre. She holds a BA in music history and theory and an Arts Administration Certificate from NYU. In addition to her position on the Green Policy Task Force, Terry is the Vice Chairman of the Yonkers Land Conservancy and the President of Yonkers Committee for Smart Development.

Loretta Miraglia

Loretta grew up in the Bronx and is raising her family in Yonkers, with two children in the public schools.

"Yonkers has such amazing diversity, especially in its student population. You can't find that anywhere else in Westchester," she says.

Loretta's patient exuberance makes her a strong Task Force member, as does her background as a lawyer and mediator. She has already made a big difference through securing, along with fellow Task Force member Molly Roffman, an EPA grant to install pollution control devices on school buses and to create an anti-idling campaign.

"I have always been concerned about the environment, and am especially worried about its impact on future generations," she says. "The task force is an important watchdog for the city."



Her hopes for the future? Loretta would like to see energy efficiency building standards in place before the development boom happens in the downtown.

"We need to be forward-looking in order to compete with other municipalities in the future," she says. "Federal and global environmental requirements are likely going to be implemented in the near term. If Yonkers sticks to the same old construction practices, its new residential and business tax base will be lured away by higher energy- efficient and cost-efficient housing and commercial space that will be coming available in the region under those new requirements."

Molly Roffman



Molly Roffman and her husband moved to Yonkers in 1995 where she is currently raising two boys and two dogs.

She and fellow GPTF member Loretta Miraglia worked to secure a \$300,000 Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) Clean School Bus Grant to reduce school bus exhaust pollutants by a process called retrofitting and to launch a no-idling initiative that would create exhaust-free school zones over the

past year. They are optimistic that the project will be completed by August.

"Every reduction in air contamination is significant to the health of the developing lungs of young children and to the aging lungs of all adults," says Molly who was also instrumental in Yonkers adopting a seasonal ban on gas-powered leaf blowers which runs June 1- September 30 each year.

As a member of the Task Force Recycling Committee, Molly works closely with Ken Greehan of the Yonkers Recycling Center and together were awarded a Coca~Cola/National Recycling Coalition Grant to place 75 beverage recycling bins in Yonkers junior high and high school cafeterias.

"The students have been thrilled to receive the bins," she says. "It's great to see them so enthusiastic to green their schools."

Margaret Setterholm

Growing up in Southern California, Margaret Setterholm's youth revolved around the sea. Her identical twin, Mary, became a national champion surfer. Her other siblings taught scuba diving. And Margaret's environmental passion landed her at City Hall working as the youth environmental liaison.



"I developed a profound respect and

love of nature from that beach," says Margaret.

The family's passion for public service combined with her concern for the environment and the world's poor led Margaret to live most of her adult life overseas in remote villages. Combining her arts and fashion design background with environmentally-friendly practices, she introduced new methods for creative micro enterprises.

This required a working rapport with tribal leaders, whether in South East Asia or in the Middle East. A United Nations Chief of Mission for Refugees called Margaret "resourceful and ingenious," when faced with her challenges to help villagers.

In the late 70's to mid-80's before anyone had ever heard of Barack Obama, Margaret lived in a small Indonesian village at the same time that his mother was there. They met at a fashion show when she bought a batik wrap dress made by one of the village women Margaret had been working with, teaching how to create and sell their handiwork.

"I remember we talked about how frustrating it was to see these poor villagers have to fend for themselves while there was a global market out there that could help stimulate their lives," says Margaret. "Both of us were there trying to help, each in our own way."

Margaret returned to the United States in 2000 to manage a spiritual retreat house located in Yonkers. On her first day here, she walked down to the waterfront and was shocked to see a number of abandoned buildings and cars, litter and rubble. It was then that Margaret became a community activist-once again.

Photo: Margaret in Cypress with His Holiness, Nazim, of the Nagshbandi Sufi Order.

Nortrud Wolf Spero



It's ironic that Nortrud has lived in Yonkers for the past 41 years after never wanting to leave New York City in the first place.

It was her husband's "fault" for putting a down payment on a comfortable house just over the city line with (this is the clincher) amazing river views and the Ludlow train station nearby.

Not one to easily become a suburbanite, Nortrud continued to work in the city while raising her family in Yonkers. One of her favorite train reads was the German news magazine "Der Spiegel" and it was during one of her commutes in 1969 (the year of the first earth day) that she read a disturbing expose on the environment.

She is not certain which came next - news that a sewage plant would soon be built on the Hudson below her backyard or fear of bringing children into the environmentally endangered world.

"That's when I decided to get involved," she says.

And involved she got. Nortrud has served on too many boards in Yonkers and Westchester County to list and has attended more meetings than one can count.

A few highlights include serving as president of the Beczak Environmental Education Center and on the Federated Conservationists of Westchester County for 14 years. Currently she is president of her residents' association, LPRA.

Her position on the Task Force is all encompassing as she lends her encyclopedic knowledge of Yonkers, if not of Westchester County, at every level.

"Yonkers as a large city has to stand up, be counted and be a model for other cities in all manner of environmental conservation, whether open space, clean air emissions and smart development," she says. "Things would not be happening without us. The task force has become the umbrella for a city-wide environmental consciousness to which the city council and the administration has been responsive."

And the Greenies Winners Were...

On Earth Day, the GPTF held their first Greenies Awards ceremony to recognize the everyday green heroes among us by honoring their environmental efforts.

Here is the script that our host, Dave Ashton, of WFAS Radio read as the crowd cheered and clapped at the Park Hill Racquet Club party.

Gail Averill - Revitalizing Leslie Sutherland Park

Gail has reclaimed the wasteland that was the city's Leslie Sutherland Park and filled it with a butterfly garden, thousands of bulbs, pathways, and native plants.

Norman Bantz - Beekeeper and Apitherapist Extraordinaire

Norman began beekeeping decades ago to help his allergy suffering son medicate himself by eating the raw, unpasteurized honey. It worked! That led Norman and his wife of 62 years into weekly stinging sessions to help ward off medical ills. It may be proof enough that even in their 80's, the only time either has been to the hospital is to visit friends.

Whitney and Teresa Boin - Planting Bird Feeding Trees

Most people get upset when the birds eat their landscape. Not the Boins. They planted dwarf apple trees for that precise purpose!

Michael Bochnik - Feathered Commitment and Compassion

As President of the Yonkers Audubon Society, Michael knows a thing or two about birds. His feathered friends get the royal treatment as he demonstrates hawks' abilities, compiles annual bird counts, leads bird watches, and so much more.

Dorrette Brown - Retail health food store with juice bar

Dorette's mission is to empower customers to make life-enhancing choices regarding health, diet and nutrition at Body and Soul Essentials, her downtown health food store.

Kelly Chiarella - Greening Montessori School 27

As PTA President, Kelly practices what she preaches—to get involved. To this end, she helped kids at Montessori School 27 start a Go Green Club. After burning the midnight oil to put their plans into place, Kelly says, "I can definitely say I trust our world in these children's hands."

Colin and Elizabeth Cooke - Mr. and Mrs. Green Yonkers

Colin and Elizabeth are the perfect green couple as they work together to live a more sustainable lifestyle. No one knows which came first, Elizabeth's yoga classes, the wood stove for home heat, new energy efficient interior storm windows, line drying the clothes, or making herbal remedies and tinctures. But we do know what is currently in the works: Elizabeth's organic gardening classes for youngsters on the ¾ acre lot they bought next to their home in order to save it from development.

Catherine Cowdery and Patrick Fitzpatrick - Sustainable Real Estate Rehabbing

When it comes to green home renovation, these business partners are setting new Yonkers sustainability standards with Energy Star appliances, building envelope insulation, pellet stoves, solar panels, and much more.

Ken Dearden and Eric Wolf - 66 Main Geothermal Heating

Developers of the first residential geothermal building in Yonkers!

Bruce and Louie DeMuro - Stream Stocking

This concerned family started stocking local streams with trout more than 50 years ago when the late Frank DeMuro first volunteered for the Westchester County job. Since then, his son Bruce and his brother Louie have filled Frank's waders in order to continue the legacy. Give it up for Bruce and Louie.

Joann Dreeben - Wildlife Rehabilitating in Yonkers

Joann has been a wildlife rehabilitator for the past 26 years and has yet to come across an animal that she can't handle, including those at the Bronx Zoo where she volunteers as a docent.

Raissa Fitzgerald - Sustainable Shopping

Raissa is a sustainable shopper who uses only recycled bags and carpools to the grocery store!

Dan Franklin - Mile High (112,000) Club Hybrid Award

Dan was first on the block to buy a hybrid when Toyota produced the first Prius in 2001! It currently has 112,000 miles on it, many of which were clocked while commuting to his job at Consumer Reports from Pleasantville, and still runs like new.

George Gerbacia - Environmental Stewardship

This Mohegan Heights resident is as green as they get.

Ilene Kodish - Dryer Composting

llene is blessed not only with a green thumb, but also with ingenuity. Rather than bulk recycle her old clothes dryer, she turned the spinner into a composter.

Margie Ford - Green Spoon Award

Margie is not only an all-organic cook, even of baby food, but also a steadfast member of her Community Supported Agriculture (CSA) food co-op. "What can't be healthy for the earth can't be healthy for the human body either."

Joseph Hatem - Mr. Clean of Henning Park

Joseph puts Mr. Clean to shame for his devotion to keeping Henning Park clean for all to enjoy!

Jerry Henkins- Johnny Appleseed of Nut Trees

Jerry is nuts about nut trees! An active member of the Northern Nut Growers Association, he grows black walnuts, white oak, gingko, Chinese chestnuts, and hickory in Yonkers community gardens, and finds them permanent homes throughout the state.

Dee Dee McKinnon- Yonkers Wildlife Rehabilitating

Dee Dee volunteers as a docent at the Bronx Zoo and works with injured, orphaned and abandoned wildlife as a licensed rehabilitator.

Cecilia Mendoza- Worm Farming

What do you get when you mix table scraps, tea bags, vegetables and fruit, and dirt? A delicious meal made for a worm. Vermiculturalist Cecilia Mendoza doesn't mind playing chef to her worm farm. She swears by the liquid they produce for the community garden where she encourages the practice.

Deirdre Mone - Greening PS 8

At her student's behest, Deirdre formed a Green Committee at School 8 where she is PTA President by creating an outdoor classroom and improving the school landscape with native plants. "Children follow the patterns modeled for them," she said.

Timothy Montalvo - School Cafeteria Composting

A high school senior who is class president at Lincoln High School, Timothy keeps tempo with student concerns, one of which is composting. With that, he started the cafeteria composting program and now produces rich soil for the grounds workers.

Warren Murphy - Neighborhood Tree Guru

Warren Murphy is the president of Mohegan Heights Neighborhood Association and can often be seen walking the neighborhood checking up on the trees for which he shows care and concern.

Eileen O'Connor, Rick O'Keefe, John Chanik, and Elizabeth DeBethune - Bigger is Better Gardening

These folks work cooperatively to grow one of the biggest and best (by all neighbor's accounts) garden in all of Yonkers. In addition to making medicinal tinctures and herbal remedies, they also keep their own bees to improve pollination and built a multi- purpose pond, complete with frogs.

Kate Pannett - Green Cleaning

Kate puts her money where her mouth is by using only "green" household cleaning products such as Seventh Generation, Biokleen and Ecover. "I feel like I have a tiny bit of control over the earth's destiny," she says.

Luis Perelman and Bob Schor - Environmental Arts

Directors of Blue Door Artist Association, Luis and Bob inspired Yonkers High students to produce 25 murals for the downtown outdoor Green Wall exhibit which depicted global warming and environment protection.

Micheal Rengers - Pioneering Green Building Standards

As VP of Operations at Sarah Lawrence, Micheael had "the great pleasure" of working with a \$1 million challenge grant to raise funds to make the school's visual arts center LEED certified—the first of its kind on Yonkers. Congrats!

Stew Leonard's - Recycled Bags

Stew's is doing their green part by entering customers in a monthly \$50 drawing to encourage recycled bag usage.

Jose Rivera -Tree Guru

Jose took notice when trees fell ill or victim to storms in his Yonkers neighborhood. He took inventory, convinced the city to give him almost 50 new trees over the years and wrote and distributed a tree care guide to residents.

Sarah Lawrence College - Green Generation Award for Sustainable Dorm Living Imagine your kids Saturday chore list including tilling the compost or picking up the farm share? These are examples of daily life students chose at Sarah Lawrence College's first sustainable dorm, which also boasts solar panels, low-flow water fixtures and more.

Groundworks Science Barge - The \$2 Dollar Bill and a Dream Award for Bringing Hands-On Science to Yonkers

With literally a \$2 dollar bill and a dream, Rick Magder of Groundwork Yonkers bravely bought the Science Barge and brought it to Yonkers where it serves as an educational facility as a hands-on hydroponic vegetable farm, thanks to support from the New York Power Authority.

Norma Silva-Guzman/Stalwart Adopt-A- Highway Volunteer

Every month Norma picks up trash and cuts invasive vines for the Park Hill Adopt-A-Highway program. Norma is a Bronx elementary school teacher who starts her students on the "green" path at an early age!

Pat Slaven - Crazy About Kayaking

It's not enough that Pat literally built her own wooden kayak last winter, but the Hudson River paddling enthusiast also helps teach others the trade as well as the wave.

Beverly Smith - Grand Doyenne of Lenoir Butterfly Garden

This 1947 graduate of Cochran School of Nursing spread her medical wings as a butterfly advocate by designing, planting and growing the Lenoir Nature Preserve safe haven for these beautiful creatures for the past 20 years.

Lee Smith - Saluting the Sun

Most everyone has referred to the cobbler's kids going barefoot, but in this case the opposite is true. Lee not only owns a green contracting company, but he also installed solar panels on his home.

Sound Associates- Saluting Solar Energy

Even though it cost this theatrical sound company about \$200,000 to install a 25,000-watt array of 150 photovoltaic panels, they got 50% back from the state Energy Research and Development Authority's Solar Electric Incentive Program! Eventually the installation may supply more than a quarter of their energy.

Matt and Pam Starobin - Soil Solarization

By smothering their lawn with plastic, Matt and Pam Starobin committed grassocide and replanted with a sweet smelling expanse of clover, wild flowers and herbs. The best part? They will never have to mow again.

Stew Leonard's - Recycled Bags

Stew's is taking plastic bag reduction one step further by entering customers in a \$50 monthly drawing to encourage recycled bag usage.

James Sutton - Extraordinarily Committed Volunteer Environmentalist

Jim likes to say he gets a "shilling from the Queen" as pay for his position as the volunteer Executive Director of the Bronx River Conservancy. Deeply committed, Jim and his volunteer members maintain 800 acres of linear parkland extending from Kensico Dam to the Bronx River.

Ellen Tattleman- Nutritional Medicine

As a family doctor at Montefiore in the Bronx, Ellen practices integrative medicine. She often uses backyard plants such as dandelion, burdock, mint, and mullein in tinctures and teas on their own or in conjunction with Western medical pharmaceuticals while expertly noting potential interactions and side effects.

Hillary Vanaria and Justin Butler - Green Roofing at Sarah Lawrence College

Sarah Lawrence College installed its second green roof last year, composed of live vegetation, as one more step in its efforts to "green" the College's campus thanks to the efforts of Justin Butler and Hillary Vanaria, co-founders of Sustainable SLC.

Claudia Wald - Compost Queen of Armour Villa

The proverbial acorn did not fall far from the tree in Claudia Wald's case. "Both of my parents were wonderful role models of how to care for our precious planet," she said, adding that composting leaves is her secret to her awe-inspiring garden. (She's even been known to take her neighbor's leaves!) She may have the richest soil in all of Yonkers.

Karin Weisburgh - All Weather Bicycle Commuter

One thing is for sure. Karin heeds no fury when (if) watching Joe Rao's weather reports on News 12. She rides her bike daily from her Larchmont home to her job at Consumer Reports in Yonkers, no matter how much it's raining, snowing, sleeting or blustering.

Photo Credit: Joan Jennings

Written by Laura Fahrenthold

email: gptf@cityofyonkers.com phone: 914-377-6067

Forward the update!

SafeUnsubscribe®

This email was sent to clesnick@aol.com by chuck.lesnick@yonkersny.gov.

Update Profile/Email Address | Instant removal with SafeUnsubscribe™ | Privacy Policy.

Email Marketing by



Yonkers Green Policy Task Force | 40 S. Broadway | Yonkers | NY | 10701